Southeast
OHIO
WINTER | SPRING 2021

Hometown Hero

Wilkesville World War II veteran, Wendell Earl Chapman knows a thing or two about resilience. p.46

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Reflecting A Region

Southeast Ohio in the time of COVID-19. p.28

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A Great History

David Butcher preserves the legacy of Appalachian diversity. p.22

SOUTHEAST
OHIO WINTER/SPRING 2021

LETTER FROM

THE EDITOR

This issue of Southeast Ohio marks an end to my college career, but it's also where I started: Appalachian Ohio.

As a Vinton, Ohio, native, it has been a pleasure to tell the stories of the region in this magazine. It was a wonderful experience to see my peers showcase people and places I grew up around, such as McCoy's One Stop (9).

In this issue, you will find what makes Southeast Ohio so special: its people. You will read about everything from family hot dogs on the Ohio River (6) to Bigfoot believers (36) to a motorcycle legend (16) to volunteer efforts during COVID-19 (28). Our staff worked hard—from home—to cover brilliant stories in the region. Though they didn't have to leave their physical comfort zone, they entered my world for one semester.

It is the people—and their stories—that make Southeast Ohio. This issue celebrates the eclectic, everyday and sometimes eccentric nature of the place I call home. I hope you enjoy a glimpse into the stories we have to share.

There are voices in our hills and hollows. All you have to do is listen.

Keri Johnson
Editor-in-Chief

MISSION STATEMENT

Southeast Ohio strives to spotlight the culture and community within our 21-county region. The student-run magazine aims to inform, entertain and inspire readers with stories that hit close to home.

ON THE COVER

Wendell Earl Chapman, World War II veteran.
PAGE 46.
Photo by Keri Johnson

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

Buckeye Furnace provides a glimpse into the historic role of metalworks in Appalachia

STORY AND PHOTO BY **LAUREN PAPP**

Buckeye Furnace stands as a testament to the legacy of iron production in Jackson County, a place once known as the "Hanging Rock Iron Region." The Furnace, comprised of a reconstructed casting house, engine house and charcoal house, is one of only three reconstructed iron blast furnaces in the United States.

One of 46 original furnaces in Ohio, Buckeye Furnace produced eight to 12 tons of pig iron per day until its disuse in 1894. The iron was used for common household goods like cooking pots, as well as in the hulls of "ironclad" warships. Iron furnaces were a major source of infrastructure and income in Southeast Ohio before they lost profitability at the end of the 19th century.

Jim Meachum, site manager at Buckeye Furnace, says the furnace's important history was one of the reasons the Ohio Historical Society, now the Ohio History Connection, chose to rebuild it.

Buckeye Furnace has transformed into an interactive facility with additional recreational opportunities, and even offers guided tours during the summer months.

"We have approximately 270 acres here," Meachum says. "We have not only the furnace, we have a nature area and trails to hike on. We have picnic facilities here, it's a beautiful setting."

VISIT **BUCKEYE FURNACE:**
123 Buckeye Park Rd, Wellston, OH 45692

ABOVE: Mural welcomes diners to the outdoor sitting area.

SERVING NOSTALGIA

Newport's The Jug: A Local Staple for 75 Years

STORY BY **VINCE DAMICO** | PHOTOS BY **VINCE DAMICO**

The lobby of The Jug is about the size of a convenience store. Restaurant patrons are greeted with the sweet scent of ice cream and serenaded by the smoky sizzle of hamburger patties on the grill.

The soft chatter of employee conversation rings throughout the small building as a buzzer goes off for the French fries. Two large menu boards sit behind the register on the brick wall featuring treats such as foot long hot dogs, the pizzaburger, Philly cheese steak, onion rings and chips, mac-n-cheese bites, wings and jalapeno poppers—just to name a few. The ice cream machine sits just off behind the register.

The Jug, located between the Ohio River and Route 7, has served hot dogs, ice cream and burgers in Washington County since the restaurant's founding in 1955. Ever since, patrons and former employees alike have returned. Originally called the Guernsey Jug, much has changed in the restaurant's 75 years. In the early days, a single employee wore many hats and ran the entire store alone.

Loretta Thomas, then a high schooler, was often that only employee. Thomas was responsible for taking orders, preparing food, making ice cream, hand pressing burger patties at opening, serving food, dissembling the ice cream machine to clean and whatever else needed doing.

"It was wonderful. Some of the best times I ever had working were at the Jug… It was a great experience. The relationships I made with customers,

ABOVE The face of The Jug, located on the Ohio River.

ABOVE: A Jug classic combo: cheeseburger and fried pickles.

my friend Stacy, and Vera Greenwood… They were really special," Thomas says.

After Thomas hung up her apron, her daughters Melissa Thomas and Alicia Cochran worked at The Jug when they were in high school, too.

"I was very shy when I was young. My friend Stacy, a popular girl at my school and someone I wouldn't normally spend time with really helped me be more confident. [Working at the Jug] really helped me come out of my shell [in high school] and I learned so many things I have used later in life like how to deal with conflict and tough situations. Learning those skills at such a young age really helped me become who I am today."

Melissa emphasizes how important The Jug is to Newport.

"It's a spot everybody knows. I think there's a lot of 'little Jugs' around. Every small town seems to have a place like The Jug… It's a real staple."

The colorful mural on the side of the resident depicts the Jug Fest, an annual June event with live music, raffle drawings, door prizes and a classic car show.

Tacy Greenwood, granddaughter of Vera and Sam Greenwood and another former employee, has fond memories of Jug Fest.

"[It's] a surreal experience. Nothing compares to eating a footlong hot dog with the secret sauce with some friends," Greenwood says.

The Jug's season of operation is from March to September every year. The final date for the 2020 season was September 27.

The Jug

Phone: (740) 473 2518

Address: 38090 OH-7, Newport, OH 45768

Open Summers
Hours: Monday-Sunday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
the-jug.edan.io

"[It's] a surreal experience. Nothing compares to eating a footlong hot dog with the secret sauce with some friends."

- Tacy Greenwood

ALL IN THE FAMILY

McCoy's One Stop a Hub for Home Cooking and Local Music

STORY BY **GRANT RITCHEY** | PHOTOS BY **LAUREN PAPP**

Pauline McCoy didn't envision she would be the owner of McCoy's One Stop, nor did she think the restaurant would last 16 years and counting.

In 2004, Pauline didn't want to open the restaurant in her hometown of Vinton, Ohio. Her husband, Lauchey McCoy, had a different idea. "I said 'no,' he said 'yes,'" Pauline says.

Set amid Gallia County's curvy roads and lush, open fields, McCoy's serves comfort food including Italian subs, pizza, hamburgers and deep-fried mushrooms. Pauline's love for food started at 8 years old when she would get home from school and help her mother make dinner for her family.

The restaurant is entirely family-run. Pauline and her nieces and nephews work together, helping with both cooking and taking orders. Lauchey helps with electrical issues and runs the flea market out back.

Before McCoy's, Lauchey worked in the coal mines in Vinton and then moved on to work at the local electrical company.

Seven years ago, McCoy's started selling antiques like lamps from auction houses and children's toys.

"We're a restaurant, but we've got some crafts and antiques while you're here," Pauline says.

McCoy's is also known for having live country and blue grass music on Friday and Saturday nights. When McCoy's opened, music wasn't in the picture. The idea came from a little boy who wanted to know if anyone knew how to play guitar. A few patrons taught the boy how to play.

Then, locals who knew how to play music started to get together and play at McCoy's on the weekend. Now they have a band play every weekend until sundown. "The music has been a blessing in disguise," Pauline says.

ABOVE: McCoy's Saturday night music, such as The Highway 7 Band's 2019 show pictured, are legendary.
Photo credit: Pauline McCoy, via Facebook.

THIS and BELOW: During the months of mandated social distancing, the music just moved outdoors, as did Lauchey and Pauline's McCoy's hospitality.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, McCoy's does not offer indoor seating, which means the bands must play outside too. Pauline loved having live bands on the weekend, so she started finding and setting up benches outside. If patrons want to catch some live music, they should head to McCoy's around 4 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

COVID-19 has also paused a staple for McCoy's One Stop: coal miners' breakfasts. One Saturday a month, McCoy's One Stop would host a coal miners' breakfast for Lauchey and about 70 of his friends. Now, Pauline doesn't know when this will happen again.

Running a family-owned restaurant has been a dream come true for Pauline, though eventually she would like to sell the restaurant. "Someday I want to sell it and go home," Pauline says.

"We're a restaurant, but we've got some crafts and antiques while you're here."

– Pauline McCoy

McCoy's One Stop
Phone: (740) 388 - 9012
Address: 15277 State Route 160, Vinton, OH
Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Live music Saturday's beginning at 4 p.m. or 5 p.m.

"LIVING DIRTY" IN GLOUSTER

Dirty Girl Coffee Spearheads a Caffeine-Fueled Fight for Economic Growth and Women's Equality

STORY BY **JYLIAN HERRING** | PHOTOS BY **LAUREN PAPP and PROVIDED**

What started out as a "side hustle" for Jane Cavarozzi turned into the anchor of a larger progressive pathway.

Cavarozzi co-founded Dirty Girl Coffee, or DG, a craft-roasted coffee company with the mission of supporting women's economic development in Appalachia. The roastery's motto "Get Dirty, Be Dirty, Live Dirty" represents the company's goal to encourage women. Whether they work in construction or in the home as a full-time mom, DG encourages all women to "Live Dirty."

"People either get a chuckle out of our name, or they really get attached to our mission," Cavarozzi says.

But DG is no joke—sourced with a socially conscious mindset, the coffee is fair trade, organic and shade-grown. Five of the coffee beans come from women-run farms in countries such as Peru and Brazil. Cavarozzi says this sourcing costs more, but social awareness trumps price.

After roasting at their center in Glouster, DG sells the coffee to wholesalers across the region, including Kindred Market and The Farmacy in Athens County, and Village Taco in Columbus. Cavarozzi also sells coffee beans and fresh brewed coffee almost every Saturday at the Athens Farmer's Market.

Cavarozzi and her wife bought land in Glouster and moved from Columbus after her former boss told Cavarozzi she needed to enjoy more of her life. In the first year of full residency, she worked on connecting with and listening to her neighbors. Cavarozzi began strategizing with developers and Glouster leaders to find her economic niche, which includes the creation of DG.

"[Cavarozzi] partnered with a few local nonprofits as well in grant writing and providing great ideas for social change through meaningful community projects," Celestia Hatthorn, previous DG roaster and farmers market representative says in an email.

DG partners with the Glouster Revitalization Organization (GRO), a nonprofit that creates strategies to revitalize the community and support entrepreneurial efforts. One of the projects facilitated by the GRO is the removal of unsafe buildings.

"People either get a chuckle out of our name, or they get really attached to our mission."

– Jane Cavarozzi

With DG's support, GRO redeveloped space into a park filled with trees and benches. They have also built a stage for people to perform during "Glouster First Friday's," a monthly event filled with music and food trucks in the summer. Due to COVID-19, this summer's festivities were canceled; but the village is hopeful for next summer.

"We [DG] just peck away at opportunities as we see them," Cavarozzi says.

DG also donates to the Veggie Van, which brings fresh fruits and vegetables to food-insecure communities. The van sells produce at affordable rates once a week in Glouster.

"Really, our [DG's] role is to take these silos that are doing great things and band them together and make it more impactful … If all these folks can communicate and work together, it will really help," Cavarozzi says.

Cavarozzi spoke with excitement about the Bailey's Trail project, a new, federally-funded attraction in Southeast Ohio. The trails bring outside bikers and hikers to the area, so Cavarozzi is sprouting ideas for Airbnb's and expansion to leaders in Glouster. Per usual, Cavarozzi has targeted an opportunity to help the town grow.

When Cavarozzi comes across an obstacle, she focuses on how to help, even if it takes some convincing and pushing.

"I'm noisy, persistent and really annoying … if people don't want to listen to me, they don't and that's okay. But eventually, they'll hear me because I won't shut up until I get my way," she says.

This buzz of passion, fueled by DG caffeine, is what Cavarozzi uses to fight for economic growth and women's equity.

ABOVE: Jane Cavarozzi serves a cup of coffee at the Athens Farmers Market.

WHERE TO BUY DIRTY GIRL COFFEE

- Athens Farmers Market
- The Farmacy, Athens
- Kindred Market, Athens
- Casa Nueva, Athens
- Tony's Tavern, Athens
- The Union Bar, Athens
- Rocky Brands, Nelsonville
- The Triple Nickle Diner, Chesterhill
- Park's Place Kitchen, Amesville
- Morris Hardware, McConnelsville
- Hocking Hills Coffee Emporium, Logan
- Village Taco, Columbus
- Cicada Book Store, West Virginia

THE ROUTE 33 BEER TRAIL

Take a Trip through Brew Country

STORY BY **MADDI BUTINA** | PHOTOS BY **LAUREN PAPP AND STAFF**

The Route 33 Brew Trail, organized in May 2018, offers diversity in dining, drinking and atmosphere. Though the pandemic modified the breweries' operations, patrons can still pick up a trail "passport" at any of the breweries or the Fairfield County Visitor's Center and stamp it at each stop.

Once the passport is filled, the patron can redeem it for a pint glass signifying their completion of the trail. The glass adds to the local experience, as it is made locally in Lancaster by Anchor Hocking, a glassware company in operation for 110 years.

"Route 33 is the one thing we have in common from one end of the county to the next," Jonette Haberfield, executive director of Visit Fairfield County, says.

Haberfield was instrumental in putting together the trail. The goal, she says, is to build connections, bring more visitors to the county, and encourage residents to explore their area.

BREWDOG DOGTAP (CANAL WINCHESTER)

BrewDog DogTap's mission is to spark passion in others about "great craft beer," community ranger Jenny Lane said in an email. BrewDog started in 2007 in Scotland and has since grown to be the largest

A frothy Dark Black Past Porter from the Combustion Brewery Taproom.

craft brewer in Europe with four international breweries and 102 bars. Their distribution is 80 countries strong.

Patrons come back for the "incredible beer quality, awesome staff and amazing experience," Lane says.

BrewDog USA features a hotel with beer taps in rooms and beers in the shower. The company's production is carbon-negative, which means it takes "twice the amount of carbon out of the air as [it] emits."

BrewDog's location on the Brew Trail is 42 acres and family friendly—dogs included!

BREWERY 33 HOCKING HILLS (LOGAN)

Brewery 33 boasts 15 beers with "German heritage" and "Appalachian style," according to the Route 33 Brew Trail website. Brewery 33 also frequently formulates experimental beer, which is made in small batches, and soda brews.

Brewery 33 has a large outdoor beer garden and patio at 27,000 square feet, as well as indoor and outdoor seating available for both patrons and their pets. Keep lookout for the brewery cats who patrol the property.

DOUBLE EDGE BREWERY (LANCASTER)

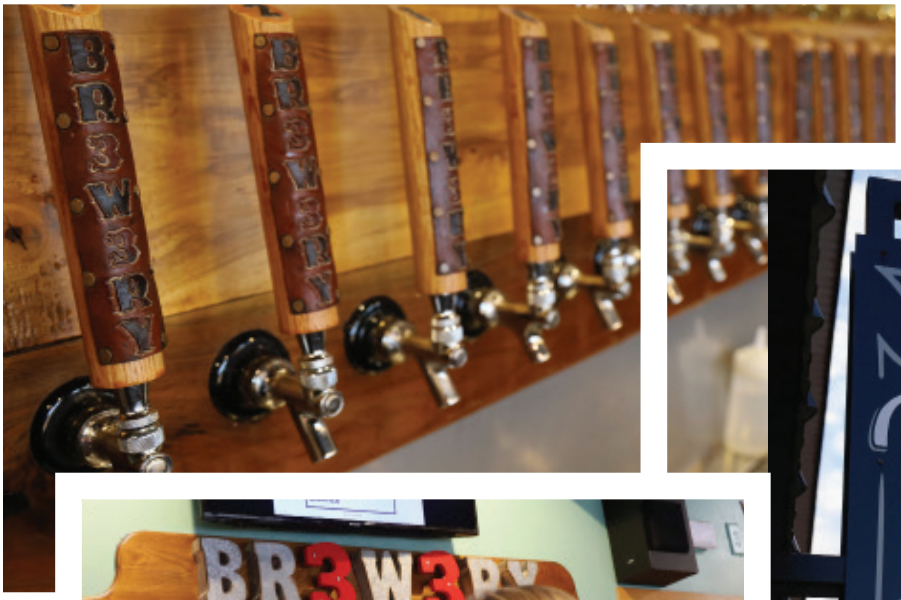
This brewery in historic Lancaster advertises itself on the Route 33 Brew Trail website as a "cozy taproom" with a warm ambiance and fresh craft beer. Though small, Double Edge offers 14 beers and multiple ciders and wines.

COMBUSTION BREWERY & TAPROOM (PICKERINGTON)

Housed in the former Pickerington Creamery, Combustion Brewery and Taproom is a community gathering spot that boasts a huge variety of drinks and a large venue space.

Combustion has up to 20 beers on tap, as well as ciders, fruit infusions, wine and craft cocktails. The variety is vast and "ever-changing," co-owner and brew master Keith Jackson says.

A peek inside Brewery 33 Hocking Hills.



LEFT: Carved wooden taps display homebrew selection at Brewery 33 Hocking Hills.

ABOVE: Sign welcomes patrons to Double Edge Brewing.

LEFT: Devon Vermillion serves a Buck Run Berliner at Brewery 33 Hocking Hills.

"Our focus is on fresh beer," Jackson says. "We pride ourselves on the fact that our beer doesn't move very much. You can get Combustion at Combustion, and that's about it. And that's on purpose."

ROCKMILL BREWERY (LANCASTER)

Rockmill Brewery offers small-production brews similar in style to Belgian beers, according to its website. They invite patrons to "make yourself at home" in their farmhouse tasting room or while exploring their idyllic grounds

LEARN MORE

Visit the Fairfield County Visitor Center
158 W. Wheeling Street
Lancaster, OH 43130

Hours: Monday-Friday
9 am. to 5 p.m.
(740) 654 -5929
route33brewtrail.com

OUTERBELT BREWING (CARROLL)

A "motley crew" runs Outerbelt Brewing, co-founder and marketing director Julia Pikor says.

Outerbelt is passionate about bringing something different to the world of craft brewing. It's one of the newer breweries on the trail, opening just over a year ago when a team of investors took the opportunity to bring the brewery to fruition in a former warehouse.

The company makes a name for itself in its uniqueness; while they would like to hit state-wide distribution, Pikor says she would like to do so "organically" and retain the company's initial identity as a great space that offers unique beers.

Patrons can find Outerbelt's brews on over 200 distributors' shelves spanning Athens to Marysville; or in Carroll, Ohio, where they can take a seat at the industrial taproom and covered patio.

Note: Since reporting, two breweries have been added to the trail: Loose Rail Brewing in the Historic District of Canal Winchester and Eldridge & Fiske Brewing in Lithopolis.

A BIODIVERSE CANVAS

Athens-based Artist Recreates Appalachian Nature

STORY BY **ASHTON NICHOLS** | PHOTO BY **LAUREN PAPP**

On a sunny afternoon in the middle of September, Savannah Freeman received a package at her doorstep.

Inside was a cherry red printing press. Freeman was giddy with excitement when she set it up. This was her first ever press for her art; she had previously printed her nature-inspired designs by pressing ink blocks with her feet onto canvases and other mediums for the past five years.

"I'm so excited about this (press)," Freeman says as she prints black wildflowers onto a tote bag. "I just got it in the mail this afternoon and I've been thinking about it all day. I've been tracking and tracking it."

The self-taught 28-year-old owns the Moonville Print Shop and sells her work at festivals like the Pawpaw Festival and Nelsonville Music Festival, as well as local venues such as Athens grocer Kindred Market.

BIODIVERSITY THROUGH ART

Freeman first learned about block printing in 2015 at a New Orleans street fair.

When the Athens native moved back home, she began to create art as a hobby—that eventually became her career.

Inspired by the natural world of Southeastern Ohio, Freeman focuses on wildflowers because she is fascinated by them, as well as animals not typically seen as "beautiful," such opossums, groundhogs, skunks and turkey vultures.

"It's so biodiverse and amazing here," Freeman says. "There's so much here that I don't think I need to branch out further than our tiny bubble."

For inspiration, Freeman goes on nature walks and hikes with her three-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Isla.

"I don't feel like I'm creative because I feel as though I'm just copying nature," Freeman says. "I love being outside here in the spring. I went on a hike this spring and counted 27 different wildflowers that were in bloom that I could recognize."

Freeman's first step in her creative process is to sketch an idea. Then, she draws it directly onto a wooden block. Next, she carves out the negative space and applies the paint, then stamps the design onto t-shirts, paper, tote bags, canvases and more.

Freeman carves about one or two new designs a week, but consistently reprints old designs. With her first printing press, she says she'll be able to speed

up designs and print things faster, which will let her to spend more time making designs enjoying nature with her daughter.

She reuses and upcycles materials to be environmentally conscious, for instance, sewing her own zipper bags or printing on upcycled fabrics.

"I'd like it to be a business that not only can support me, but can bring attention to our area and help us give back, too," Freeman says. "This place is awesome."

After the coronavirus pandemic canceled nearly every festival this year, Freeman transitioned her platform online to Etsy and Instagram.

"I'm branching out," Freeman says. "When the pandemic is over, it'll be good because then we'll have expanded social media."

Riley Kinnard, co-owner of Kindred Market, heard about Freeman's prints through a staff member. She says she knew immediately that Freeman's art would sell at Kindred, which sells many local products.

"She's a really good fit for our vibe, and I knew that people wanted (her work)," Kinnard says.

"It's so biodiverse and amazing here. There's so much here that I don't think I need to branch out further than our tiny bubble."

– Savannah Freeman

Freeman looks over a print of wild-flowers, one her inspirations.

ABOVE: Freeman rolls her signature Drive By Black ink.

RIGHT: Prints for sale featuring upcycled materials.

PLACES YOU CAN BUY FREEMAN'S ART:

Moonville Print Shop on Etsy:
http://www.etsy.com/shop/MoonvillePrintShop

Kindred Market:
284 E. State St, Athens OH

LEGACY OF A HILLCLIMBER

Earl Bowlby's Twenty-Five Year Career as a Motorcycle Legend

STORY BY **GRANT RITCHEY** | PHOTOS BY **LAUREN PAPP**

A wooden cottage perches atop a gravel driveway. A deck on its outer end faces a wall of trees blocking light from the roadway. Near the ravine, a shed sits full of motorcycle and tractor parts, covered in overgrown foliage and a Suzuki sign.

The garage, on the left, is filled with motorcycle parts, ranging from spark plugs to 8 ounce "Old Reliable" Chain Oil that in the '40s went for $1.95.

"That oil is about as old as I am," Earl Bowlby says.

This view is an everyday sight and reminder for national hill climbing legend Earl Bowlby.

Bowlby, 86, of Logan, was at the forefront of the hill climb industry. Hill climbing is a motorsport where motorcyclists attempt to ride up steep hills in the fastest time possible. Starting his amateur hill climbing career at 28. He began his professional career in 1966.

Bowlby's first race was the amateur hill climb in at the Children's Home in Lancaster. He hopped on his tiny single singular BAS "star fire" roadster. Staring up the steep dirt hill, all he could think was, "how fast can I get up there and how am I going to do it?"

He started the engine, revved the motorcycle and let loose. Dirt flew up in the air, past his back tire and the exhaust from his motor followed him up the path. Bowlby made it halfway up the hill before his scout fell back to the bottom.

Bowlby's second time hill climbing is a far different story. He made it up the hill and continued to do so for over 40 years.

The continued pursuit of hill climbing is euphoric for Bowlby: the test of not only how fast can one get up a hill but also how can one make it up the hill still in one piece. The competition, companionship and love of motorcycles made Bowlby who he is today: a man passionate about the craft of hill climbing.

UPBRINGING

Bowlby's love for motorcycles began in high school. When he was a senior at Logan Central School, he chose auto maintenance for his diversified occupation, a program where students work half the school day in their field of choice.

Bowlby worked at Tansky Motors, where he patched up old cars in the body shop to be resold.

He found not only his interest in cycles at the shop, but also his friends who hill climbed: the Clark brothers. The Clark brothers needed motorcycle parts for their hill climbing, which is where they met Bowlby. This sparked Bowlby's inspiration of hill climbing.

But no great hill climbers are without their biggest fan. Bowlby's greatest fan was his wife, Shirley Jean Bowlby...

Bowlby's parents had mixed reactions when they found out he started hill climbing. His father was excited to see him hill climb when he could. His mom was scared of seeing her son go up those steep, rock-filled hills, with only a helmet and a leather jacket for protection.

"There was no injury I couldn't walk away from," Bowlby says.

PROGRESSION

As Bowlby started competing in more hill climbing events, he constantly needed to restock and upgrade his bike.

The closest shop to get the parts needed to upgrade his bike was in Lancaster, a 30 minute drive for Bowlby. He had the knowledge of what parts to get it and how to maintain his bike. With

ABOVE: Bowlby reflects on his career as a hillclimber.

this intuition, he decided to take a chance.

Bowlby sent in a letter to the BSA franchise in New Jersey and opened his own dealership in Hocking County in 1960 when he was 27 years old.

Bowlby started winning national tournaments, over 80, in fact. He fondly remembers 1984, the year he won the crown jewel for hillclimbers: the triple crown. The triple crown is when a hillclimber wins a grand national, a national and a Canada national. He also set a Michigan record of 4.71 seconds.

"No one's ever done that," Bowlby says.

RETIREMENT

Bowlby retired from his hill climbing career in 1990, after having another successful national hill climbing season. He wanted to build his home, make a portable sawmill and build a log cabin near his house.

But no great hill climbers are without their biggest fan. Bowlby's greatest fan was his wife, Shirley Jean Bowlby. Jean took an encyclopedia sized interest in her husband's hill climbing career. She kept records of his wins, hill climbing tournament dates, magazine clippings, magazine covers and interviews. Jean even kept postcards of where they traveled throughout the country.

One trip Bowlby remembers most is their trip to Alaska. In 1988, Bowlby and Jean visited the state for three weeks to sight-see. Alaska's Yellow Knife northwest territories are filled with what Bowlby loves: dirt roads, tree-lined roadsides and low-speed limit roads.

He's living the dream, even if some of his visions aren't yet complete. The sawmill is not finished, nor is the log cabin. What he does have, though, is history at home. Trophies that reflect off the windows in the house, motorcycles in his garage where American Motorcycle Association magazines sit tucked away in filing cabinets.

The American Motorcycle Association Museum has remembered the history of Earl Bowlby by showcasing his 1967 BSA 650. A heavily modified machine he built in 1976, Daniel Clepper, Collections Manager, says.

"Modifications to the machine include boring it out from 654cc to 782cc displacement, running special Venolia pistons, and an extended subframe and rigid swingarm that Bowlby fabricated himself," Clepper says. Bowlby took the BSA to the 1976 Nationals in Muskegon, Michigan, where set the 4.71 time record.

Earl Bowlby's legacy continues to live on, one spark plug at a time.

"There was no injury I couldn't walk away from."

RIGHT: Bowlby poses with memorabilia from his extensive collection.

BELOW: A sampling of trophies Bowlby won over the years.

FAMILY FAIRY TALE FUN IN THE WOODS

Storybook Trails Await Exploring in State Parks

STORY BY **DESTINIEE JARAM** | PHOTOS BY **LAUREN PAPP**

At the Storybook Trails in Dillon State Park, a three-year-old ferociously races his parents to a trailside panel about Oak trees. He runs down a once-black path, now orange, yellow and red from fallen Sycamore leaves. The panel, featuring "Miss Maple's Seeds" by Eliza Wheeler, shows an image of varying plant seeds next to the storybook page.

The Storybook Trails program features activities, educational materials and children's stories about nature, printed on panels placed along the looping trails of Ohio state parks for families to explore. Participating parks are chosen based on accommodations for families such as restroom access, playgrounds, parking lots and trails that loop to make it easier for tired toddlers as they charge final victory laps.

"It's a fun way to get kids exercising, not just the body, but the mind," says Director of Special Projects for Ohio Department of Natural Resources, or ODNR, Alyssa Yaple. "We hope that they will learn along the way and notice things that maybe they wouldn't have before."

The project began in October 2019, when the ODNR collaborated with The Imagination Library. Inspired by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and

> *"It's a fun way to get kids exercising, not just the body, but the mind."*
>
> **– Alyssa Yapel.**

storybook trails in Tennessee, each month, the state-funded program mails a book to any enrolled child under five years of age. These books create a series of interactive educational trails for children and are rotated semi-annually.

Typically, each book has 16 pages. For each page, there is a panel illustrating the story, along with educational prompts or activities. Each trail also features a free "Little Library" for children to take or leave a book.

The Storybook Trails can be found at Alum Creek State Park in Lewis Center, Dillon State Park in Zanesville, John Bryan State Park in Yellow Springs, Maumee Bay State Park in Oregon and Wingfoot Lake State Park in Mogadore. The Dillon State Park and Wingfoot Lake State Park trails are also paved for accessibility for people using strollers or wheelchairs.

"The main goal is to increase literacy in communities through the state parks," ODNR naturalist at Dillon State Park Nathan Zimovan says. The trails are also a statewide initiative to get children involved in both nature and physical activity. An example of this unique learning experience can be found at Alum Creek State Storybook Trail.

The lessons of "In the Trees, Honeybees!" by Lori Mortensen complements the abundance of pollinator plants at Alum Creek. The book teaches how bees communicate by wiggling their behinds, which prompts the children to mimic them. The park also features bee feeders along the trail to teach children, and parents, not to fear honeybees—as they do not bother humans.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

ohioimaginelibrary.org

Dillon State Park, 5265 Dillon Hills Dr. Nashport, OH

"We want our younger generations to grow up and be stewards of our natural resources," Yaple says. "Having them out and experiencing nature at a young age is important for when they get to respect the environment. There are so many benefits to kids getting outside. Even if they're not trying to learn, they're going to be learning outside."

Each book reflects each park's unique ecosystem. "As an Oak Tree Grows" by G. Brian Karas was selected for John Bryan State Park because of its slender Oak trees; trees along the trail are labeled for children.

"A lot of kids that come out are still in that learning stage of reading, so it's really good for that because of the reading level," Zimovan says. "But there's a lot of interesting facts, too, that adults don't know."

ODNR currently has one Storybook Trail in each region of Ohio but hopes to add five more trails—one per region—over the approaching year. Toddlers and families are encouraged to explore the whimsical trails across Ohio.

ABOVE: Informational panel invites child to trail.

A GREAT HISTORY

David Butcher Preserves Legacy of Appalachian Diversity in Tabler Town

STORY BY **DESTINIEE JARAM** | PHOTOS BY **BRADLEIGH AEH**

Inside a small building in the middle of rural Ohio—disguised as an earth-toned, metal pole barn —is an overflowing archive of David Butcher's ancestors: the founders of Tabler Town.

David calls the exhibit at his home, "People of Color." His grandmother, Elise, inspired David to begin his collection of artifacts as a young boy. Once, in middle school, he divulged to her that he found Black history depressing—that all he ever heard was his people were slaves. In response, Elise gave David a photo of his great-great-grandfather, a Civil War veteran.

"I said, 'wow'." David laughs at the memory. "They sure didn't tell me about this in school!"

Some 40 years later, David is devoted to preserving his ancestry and the history of Tabler Town, a Black-founded town, circa 1830.

Michael Tabler, enslaver and paternal genesis of the Tabler family, originally lived in what was Virginia (now West Virgina) where he owned his wife, Hannah, and six children. When Tabler realized his mixed-race children would have a hard time claiming their inheritance, he moved the family to Ohio. He bought each of them their freedom, emancipated them, and gave each their own plot of farmland two miles away from Stewart. He freed his children and lived with them for 13 years his death in 1843.

Today, maps call the village Kilvert, but locals still call it Tabler Town.

"If we don't tell the story, it will be lost," David says. "My goal is to try to preserve [our culture]. Whether it's passing it on by telling the younger generations, or with a photo or an artifact; the goal is to try to keep it alive as long as we can."

LEFT: Elias Butcher, David Butcher's great uncle, served in World War I.

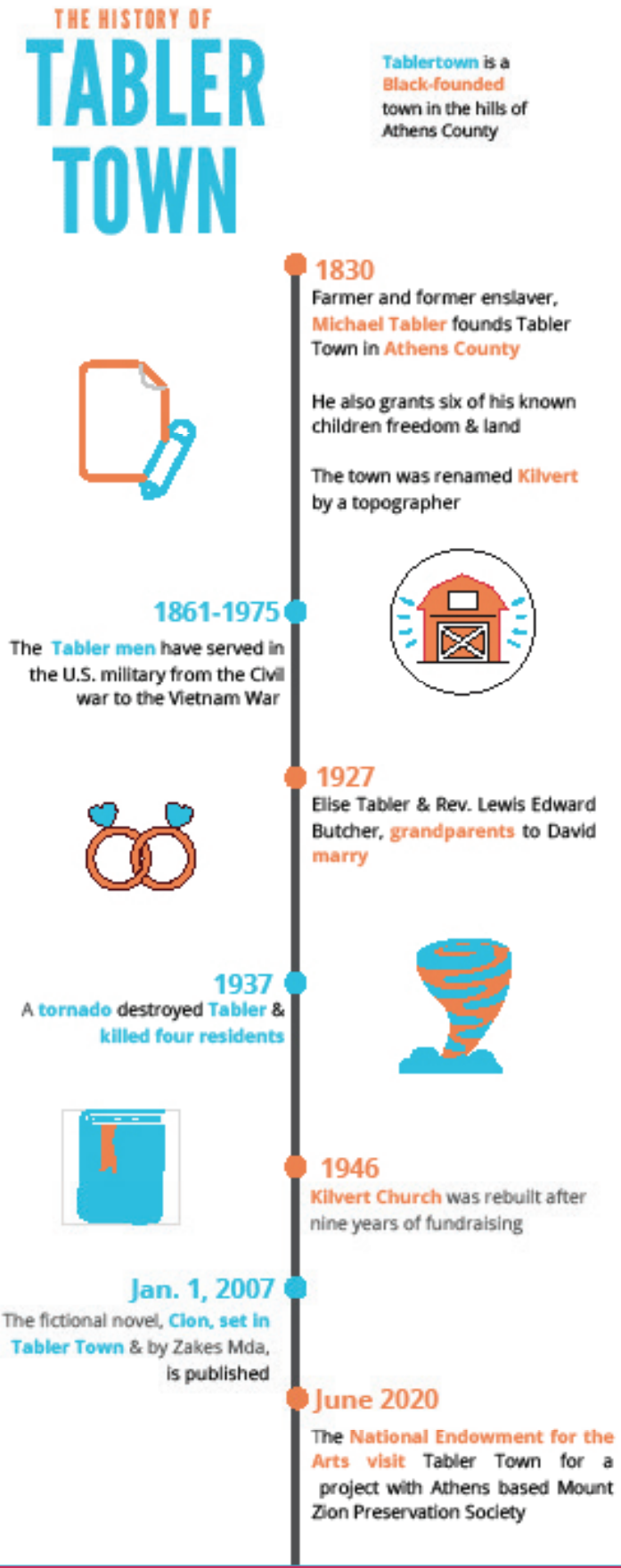
WAYS OF BEING

Zakes Mda, South African novelist, poet and playwright, became intrigued by Kilvert while he was an English professor at Ohio University (Athens). His award-winning novel, "Cion," set in rural Ohio, concerns the descendants of white, Black and Native Americans who met and had children during the time of the Underground Railroad.

"I fell in love with their heritage there, of which, they are very proud," Mda says. "It was important to tell that story. It was the heritage and the fact they identified very strongly with their history."

This story of Black success in the 1800s reshapes the history of American heritage and Blackness. Tabler Town is an account of Black enterprise, generational assets and the resourceful spirit of Appalachian culture.

"Black is not just one Black experience; there are many different ways of being Black, and many traditions even within these Black cultures," Mda says.



THOUSANDS OF STORIES

"I could tell you thousands of stories," David says inside his museum, as he gestures to a weathered, brass ring inside a small, transparent box.

The ring belonged to Elsie; it was her grandfather's, Jerry Sims, born 1822, a Civil War solider and original ring owner. David's father-in-law found it with a metal detector in the back of his property.

The Butchers have a long history of preserving their patriotism. Elias Butcher, whose wooden leg now rests in his great-nephew's museum, served in World War I.

"You really have to think differently now about our early pioneers," David says.

MY HOME IS STILL HERE

In 1937, a tornado—locals called it a "cyclone" because it carried water—destroyed most of the town. Four residents were killed and even more were forced to move to neighboring towns, such as Athens and Cutler, to repair their lives. Church of God, the two-room church of Tabler, took nine years to rebuild.

Around 40 people live in Tabler Town today. Sandra Tabler Smith, David's second cousin, lives about 50 miles away but still comes back for church and community events.

"I just like being here," Sandra says. "My home is still here. My parent's house is the one here up on the corner."

David lives in nearby Stewart with his wife. In the future, David hopes to digitize the archive to make the exhibit more accessible to people. He is funded entirely through the donations of visitors, reunited family members and supporters.

"If we are to survive as the people, we have a great history—but you have to be able to produce something and put something in someone's hands when they visit, so—yep, that's my goal," David says with a promising smile.

Historic photos on display at the Multicultural Genealogical Center.

A TALE OF TWO STATIONS

Explore the History of These Hidden Underground Railroad Stops

STORY BY **DESTINIEE JARAM** | PHOTOS BY **LAUREN PAPP**

In the 19th century, over 40,000 people traveled the Underground Railroad of Southeast Ohio on their journey to freedom from slavery. These routes were quietly traveled by conductors and slaves seeking freedom during the 1800s. The locations and hiding spots of the Underground Railroad were such well-kept secrets—they are still being discovered.

A SECRET RING

A former station on the Underground Railroad sits in Millfield: The brick Weethee home was a refuge for escaped slaves during the 1840s and 1850s.

Abolitionist Daniel Weethee built the house in 1804. It is centered around an exceptionally large brick chimney. The chimney is no longer functional, but like the rest of the 216-year-old building, it is made of the original wood, stone and brick.

The current owner, Dane McCarthy, lived in the house in his 20s and bought it more recently.

"I bought the house because I used to live in it, and I always loved the house," McCarthy says. "It was like coming back home or something. The furniture I had left 25 years before was still here; an envelope was even addressed to me on the floor."

McCarthy says he heard rumors from Millfield residents that the Weethee house was part of the Underground Railroad.

He contacted Weethee's great-granddaughter, Bernarda Bryson-Shahn. Bryson Shahn, an artist, told McCarthy she and a friend were once playing in the attic when they found a large ring attached to a door. When lifted, the ring revealed a stairway.

In the dark and cramped stairway, enslaved Americans would spend days and nights silently hiding in the home of benevolent strangers, trusting them to protect their safety as they traveled for freedom on the Underground Railroad.

The hideaway for freedom seekers in the Weethee house is now concealed in a seven-foot-tall walk-in closet. Aside from a door and a step

added by McCarthy, the hiding place is untouched—entrenched in history—like the rest of the home.

INTERTWINED

Ada Woodson Adams helped found the Multicultural Genealogical Center (MGC) in 1999. The Chesterhill organization records Southeast Ohio's blended cultural history.

In 2005, the MGC bought an abandoned house in Chesterhill because the building was rumored to be an Underground Railroad stop. The Bye Quaker family built the house, which was originally a log cabin, around 1859. Other Quaker families lived in the house for over 160 years.

Reynoldsburg United Methodist Church and Chesterhill residents renovated the house after the MGC bought it. They helped with painting, plumbing and HVAC, but the historical status of the house remained in question.

Then a Reynoldsburg volunteer—whose family had owned the house in the 1980s—confirmed that it was an Underground Railroad station.

"That just blew my mind—that it was part of the history of the Underground Railroad," Adams says.

The hiding place is in the basement, tucked behind shelving. The basement's current ceiling beams are constructed of hand-hewn wooden logs saved from the original cabin. The walls are made from the initial basement's brown, white and red sandstone and fieldstone. Most of the building's original locks, windows, doors, walls, floors and railings remain.

Upstairs is a large cabinet that opens into a desk full of history and artifacts. As Adams takes books out, she rattles off decades of local history as if it were her own family's history.

"As we research our history, we discover these untold stories of Black history," Adams says. "You have to listen to all voices because we are intertwined."

ABOVE: Fugitive slaves often took refuge in historic Kincaid Cave.

ABOVE: Adams helped found the Multicultural Genealogical Center in 1999.

"As we research our history, we discover these untold stories of Black history. You have to listen to all voices because we are intertwined."

– Ada Woodson Adams

REFLECTING A REGION

This special feature takes a look at how Southeast Ohio, an area known for its resiliency and practicality, has adapted to the global pandemic.

ABOVE: Bob O'Neil, co-owner of the Village Bakery and Café in Athens, has expanded online ordering and instituted weekly porch pickups. As of this writing, the business remains closed to indoor dining.

REFLECTING A REGION

Southeast Ohio in the Time of COVID-19

STORY BY **ASHTON NICHOLS, KERI JOHNSON, ETHAN SANDS, IAN MACKENZIE, BRANDON MONTY, KELSEY LAURIEL, HAYLEE FOLLOWELL AND MADDI BUTINA**

After a summer of lockdowns, people adapted to the "new normal" in the fall, with a mandated mask policy and many safety precautions statewide. Parents worked from home while their children received an education, right alongside them. Small businesses reopened under new guidelines, while others closed forever. Restrictions caused by COVID-19 led to the cancellation of concerts, weddings, large gatherings and vacations across the country.

While things may not go back to how they were, at Southeast Ohio, we captured these moments of people adapting to change. It's a story of resiliency and how people adapted to numerous challenges throughout the year.

COMMERCE, CARRY-OUT & A CREATIVE APPROACH

Wittich's Candy Shop has survived the Civil War, World War I, the Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, World War II and now--the Coronavirus pandemic.

Gottlieb F. Wittich started the confectionery in Circleville in 1940 and it's the nation's oldest family-owned and operated candy shop.

Janet Wittich currently runs the store— the fourth generation to run the shop. The pandemic closed the shop for nearly all of April 2020. It was the only time the shop has closed for a long period of time, Wittich says.

For a few days, the store was open with reduced hours. Now, they are back to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The shop was, and still is, offering curbside pickup for sweets.

"The shop is busier than it was before," Jane says.

Dodson's on Broadway in New Lexington closed its dining room when the pandemic started, but the restaurant stayed open for carryout. Owner Cheryl Dodson says the restaurant was prepared to transition to this format.

Overall, business in the dining room is down, but the community has been supportive and stuck by Dodson's side. Dodson's serves pizza, sandwiches, Stromboli and many sweet desserts.

"I would not trade (the customers) for a million dollars," Dodson says. "I can't say enough about them."

The family-owned and operated Unicorn Wine Guild in Belpre did not have to close. As one of the only wine-making manufacturers in

Southeast Ohio, it was considered an essential business. The winery has 50 varieties of wine people can try, paired with meat and cheese boards as well as sandwiches, soup and salad. It is one of the only places in Southeast Ohio that sells wine-making equipment

The only events the business hosts are "how to make wine at home" classes. The classes are limited to six people at a time, Barbara Whitaker, the owner of the Unicorn Wine Guild, says.

Whitaker reports that more people are interested in making wine at home as a hobby. Making wine is a speedy process that can take as little as two weeks to make. And while the guild may have hit a bump in 2020, it hopes to accomplish its goals for 2021.

"We want to provide a pleasant experience for our customers and hopefully bring a bit of tourism in," Whitaker says. "A lot of people on the weekend want to come down to this area."

KEEPING IT LOCAL

Across the nation, local businesses have struggled to stay open, but Southeast Ohio's unique character of loyalty and resourcefulness has helped keep mainstays in business.

Hometown Threads Ohio is a screen printing and embroidery business that serves schools and local businesses, but the Chillicothe shop closed for about two months due to the pandemic.

While the physical business was closed, the online store was still operating, Threads owner Ben Thompson says. During this time, he and his employees worked to make sure its online presence was improved by being more creative and connecting with their loyal customers.

Once the shop opened back up, Thompson saw a significant increase in their screen printing business because businesses started to reopen and needed uniforms for new employees.

ABOVE: Wittich's Candy Shop in Circleville is open with reduced hours.

ABOVE: Children learning at the Child Development Center in Athens.

Customer loyalty was a huge help to Dad's Primitive Workshop in Marietta, an antique, home décor and boutique shop.

The pandemic has negatively affected business, but its customer base has been very supportive, Charlie Clay, owner of the workshop, says.

To adapt, the business started a "Lunchtime Live" event on Facebook at noon on weekdays where people can virtually get together and the shop sells about 20 items. The shop has also been selling more items online.

Hornor and Harrison in Parkersburg, West Virginia, is a clothing store that offers tailoring, rentals and formal wear attire.

The store was closed for six weeks during the start of the pandemic, David Boone, the owner of the store, says. It has also shifted to offering more casual clothes, other than formal clothes, because the wedding business is still good.

One business that has seen an uptick in sales is David White Services, which specializes in heating and cooling equipment as well as installing fireplaces and stoves. They have offices in Athens and Lancaster and serve most of the area. They never had to close,

ABOVE: Athens Middle School sits empty this fall school day as students work from home. School systems across the region have taken differen
bringing mobile hotspots to the houses without access, and loaning Chromebooks to kids without computers. Students, teachers and parents h

since their business is considered essential in Ohio, says Matthew Stallard, sales manager.

"We have not slowed down at all," Stallard says. "As many members of our community are spending more time at home during the pandemic and want to make their homes as cozy and secure as possible, we have seen a dramatic increase in both fireplace and whole-house generator installations."

IN THE CLASSROOM

This fall, students swapped lunch boxes for masks, classroom desks for home offices and classroom time for online learning. Some students began the semester online, while others went back to school.

April Stewart, director of online and blended learning at the Athens City School District, oversees communication with teachers, students and families.

With 26,000 students participating in online learning, issues have arisen with the virtual transition. WiFi access has been a major problem for rural areas. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provided a grant for Chromebooks for Athens and Nelsonville students on a need-as basis, but the concern of connectivity remained.

Students have been able to access WiFi hotspots in a variety of ways. Ohio University (Athens) partnered with the Athens City School District by offering designated parking spots with hotspot capabilities.

"It's a really positive thing to see how people come together during a stressful situation," Stewart says.

Students who opted for blended learning were slowly phased in at the end of November. The phase-in process included two groups of students at half-capacity. The

nt approaches, ranging from in-person learning to blended learning to entirely online. With access to technology a factor, strategies have included ave had to continuously adapt as conditions and CDC guidelines change.

students either attended classes on Tuesday and Wednesday or Thursday and Friday. All students had class online on Monday.

Other preventative measures include mandated mask policies, handwashing stations and hand sanitizer in every room.

While some parents have opted to keep their children remote for the semester, Jeremiah Johnson chose to send his 8-year-old daughter, Sierra, back to Wellston Intermediate for in-person classes.

Johnson says classes for Sierra started out hybrid, with in-person classes two days a week, which lasted three weeks. Then she went back five days a week and continued that routine for the rest of the semester.

"I have not been worried about it, mainly because my job is way more likely to be the bane of transmission," Johnson says.

Sierra has to wear a mask unless she is eating, and the seats in classrooms are socially distanced. There are 15 students in her third grade class.

Johnson has not been able to meet any of his daughter's teachers. Normally, he would go to orientation, parent-teacher meetings and be involved with her classroom.

Students at River Valley High School (RVHS), in Gallia County, attended classes in-person the entire fall. Extra precautions, such as wiping down surfaces and using hand sanitizer, are in place, alongside the state-mandated mask policy. Students also have assigned seats at lunch to limit interaction and make contact tracing easier.

Brea McClung, an American History teacher at RVHS, has 22 students in her class, and says socially distancing is a challenge. McClung is still doing everything in her power to keep her students and herself safe.

McClung says the most challenging part of teaching during the pandemic is getting to know her students. Seeing her students' faces for the first time after bringing them outside for a project brought tears to the teacher's eyes.

"When kids are in a mask, you only get to know them from the mask up," McClung says. "That's 150+ names just attached to eyeballs ... It's not the easiest task."

To help, RVHS started "Project Smile," which features photographs of teacher and student smiles posted throughout the building's hallways.

INTO THE WILD

During the pandemic, outdoor establishments have been busier than ever. When Ohio's recreational facilities and parks reopened at the end of May, many individuals flocked to the outdoors in search of socially-distanced hobbies such as hiking, camping, canoing, kayaking and horse riding.

Due to high demand, many retailers are running low on bikes, canoes and kayaks. Outdoor business owners, such as Bernie Roell of Murray's Landing have taken notice.

"Once restrictions were lifted, then I think people were anxious to get out and do something. Since a lot of restaurants, movie theaters and other activities were still closed, outdoor activities went through the roof,' Roell says.

Located just outside of Hocking Hills, Murray's Landing opened in 2017 and offers three different trips via canoe, kayak or tube. The canoe and kayak livery also includes a campground overlooking the Hocking River where patrons can fish and utilize fire rings and picnic tables. The business has plans to open a second location in Nelsonville.

> *"The nice part is that with the campground a lot of things were already social distanced, so the changes there really weren't all that drastic."*
>
> **- Bernie Roell**

With more patrons lies greater responsibility for businesses. Cleaning guidelines must be followed strictly, especially in public areas such as bathrooms, showers and drinking fountains.

"We take good care of our place and do a good job of cleaning," Roell says. "The nice part is that with the campground a lot of things were already social distanced, so the changes there really weren't all that drastic."

Adjusting has not been as easy for Southern Ohio Hunting Preserve.

"We were closed down for about three months, but things have picked back up recently," owner Butch Alexander says.

The preserve offers lodging, weddings and a variety of different

ABOVE: The Rostetter family from Shaker Heights hikes Cantwell Cliffs in Logan. Northern Ohioans have been traveling south to enjoy warmer temperatures and the area's natural beauty. Pictured left to right: Sam, Matthew, Lucy and Grace.

LEFT: Murray's Landing has been bustling with activity as homebound residents seek refuge in the outdoors.

animals to hunt on its 600-acre preserve.

Alexander says that all patrons receive masks and cleaning supplies upon arrival. Hunters only pay for what they harvest, with pricing varying by animal.

Outdoor businesses also altered transportation. Given that some trails and rivers are miles away from check-in and registration desks, participants often use bus transportation provided by businesses to reach their destinations.

Hocking Hills and Adventures limits its seating on buses to every other seat as a safety measure, along with a mask-mandate. Assistant to the president of operations Marty Smith says that for the most part, customers have been understanding and cooperative.

"Bus transportation has cost us the most in business since we have to separate each party to every other seat," Smith says. "Getting people to wear masks on the transportation has been difficult at times as well, but we just want to ensure that we are keeping people as safe as possible."

Even with limitations, outdoor business owners and employees such as Smith have been amazed at how business spiked over the summer.

"The cabins have been consistently booked since we opened," Smith says. "We have to allow a day between stays for cleaning. There's a little bit of breathing space between stays for employees to clean, and we've had no issues with the cabins this year."

LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

When Haylee Hogan first imagined her wedding, her dream did not involve masks, social distancing and hand sanitizer party favors.

"My wedding was originally supposed to be outdoors, but due to bad weather we were forced to move inside," says Hogan, who got married at The Farmers Daughters and Son wedding venue in Marietta. "This forced many people to have to leave immediately after the ceremony because it was unsafe to have so many people so close together."

Cedar Grove Lodging in Logan has been able to run weddings and enforce safety precautions as well, says Amy Mecum, general manager.

Guidelines for gatherings from the CDC require all guests and staff to wear masks. Cedar Grove has also limited capacity and assigned one staff member to each event to disinfect high-touch surfaces, like bathrooms and tables.

"We found planning COVID-style weddings challenging at first," Mecum says. "To be sure we are taking every safety precaution, the event manager and I meet weekly to discuss our upcoming events and COVID procedures."

Beth Flick, founder of BFlick Photography, experienced a surplus of business after the stay at home order was lifted.

Flick is a wedding and family photographer. She normally shoots about 12 weddings a year, but by the end of 2020, she will have shot 17.

"I'm not exactly sure why my business has done better this year than previous years," Flick says. "It could be families are just really valuing family time ... and want to

capture family memories."

Flick says all the weddings she shot this year have been different. Some customers rescheduled until 2021, while others had small ceremonies of 10 to 15 people.

Mateja Holter also experienced significant change to her business. Holter is the owner and designer of Orchard Floral, which she runs from her home in Athens.

When delivering flower orders, Holter wears a mask and refrains from coming into physical contact with customers. As for in-person consultations with brides, Holter tries to meet them outdoors, but also does consultations over email and phone.

"I've had two weddings downsize, which usually means the guest size and the flowers decrease as well," Holter says. "But it was very cool to see how some brides were able to really enjoy a more intimate wedding."

THE FUTURE OF FAITH

With singing a means of transmission and tightly packed pews now a public health hazard, churches, temples and other religious spaces have had to alter operations to move forward in faith.

Hillel in Athens used to bustle on Shabbat, the Jewish holy day. Attendees would be greeted at the door, have dinner and hold hands for blessings.

Now, the building is on lockdown and services are held online. Students are no longer allowed to study in the building, intern Hannah Movshin says. To-go Shabbat meals are taken to the elderly. Activities are held on Zoom and Facebook Live as members now make and maintain connections virtually.

Fellowship of Faith, a church in Gallia County, leaned on the medical professionals in its congregation to help transition the church into safer protocols.

"This meant we may have taken things a bit more seriously than other churches in the area,"

ABOVE: A scene at a pandemic wedding captured by Beth Flick.

ABOVE: Socially distanced service at the Athens Unitarian Universalist Church.

ABOVE: A sampling of completed masks sewn by Adrienne Nagy.

lead pastor Jamie Sisson says in an email, "we made decisions based on the information at the time."

The church opened in June, but closed again July through August. When it reopened in August, Sisson reports that people were much more willing to follow guidelines.

The church streamed services from an empty auditorium. In-person activities such as Bible studies and service projects were canceled.

Members have shared how they take virtual Communion: "We had quite a few using cookies and milk. Goldfish were a popular choice, too," Sisson says.

Sisson says now, people know worship isn't "defined by a building or a set time of the week. It is a frame of mind."

TOGETHERNESS

Though the pandemic requires social distancing, it hasn't stopped Southeast Ohio residents from helping their neighbors.

This past spring, when novice sewer Meg Dillon saw local and state hospitals suffering from PPE shortages, she knew she had to help. Dillon started a service organization virtually -- on Facebook.

What is now MasksNow Southeast Ohio started out as "Mask Makers of Athens County". The Facebook group–all volunteers, from master seamstresses to sewing hobbyists–united to make masks.

Dillon, an IT business analyst in OIT at Ohio University (Athens), says she's made well over 1,000 masks for the project. Many of her masks are free and donated. It isn't unusual for the group's members to boast numbers like these; Adrienne Nagy, a pediatric therapist from Amesville, has given away over 400 homemade masks and her daughter, Anna Heinrich, from Athens, has made more than 1,100.

Nagy started making masks because she saw a shortage in a niche need — masks for children who rely on central feeding tubes.

Nagy started with scrap fabric and a pattern she found online from Deaconess Hospital in Illinois. She gives away most of her masks for free. She once donated 46 masks in one drop-off to Amesville Elementary.

"I think it's an important thing to help the spread of COVID. I am very much pro-mask," Nagy says.

Dillon estimates it takes her 5-10 minutes to make a mask. She's never done anything like this before, she says.

Dillon is immunocompromised and grateful for those wearing masks in public. For her, mask-making is a satisfying volunteer experience.

"It is a really big chunk of time," she says. "But it is incredibly rewarding."

Dillon loves spotting her masks in the wild. Sometimes she'll see people and say to herself, "I think I made that mask."

ABOVE: Spotted Horse Ranch offers guided horseback riding and camping for socially distanced recreation.

FOLLOW THE FOOT

Bigfoot Sightings Continue in Guernsey County

STORY BY **JOHN JAROSIK** | PHOTOS PROVIDED

In January 2020, a video surfaced of a hairy ape-like creature, stalking Salt Fork State Park in Guernsey County. The video, entitled "Salt Fork Ohio Grassman - Bigfoot - Sasquatch" and uploaded on YouTube by We Do It Outdoors, caused a stir, receiving statewide media attention.

The video gained a lot of attention, despite how common Bigfoot sightings are in Guernsey County and the entire state.

According to BFRO.net, a website that records the number of Bigfoot sightings across North America, Guernsey County had 14 reported listings in 2020–the second highest in the state, only to Portage. Ohio ranked fourth in most reported Bigfoot sightings across the country in 2020, with 302 listings.

"If you take 100 reports, 85% of those are flushed immediately, the next 7% are hoaxes and the remaining 7% you have to take seriously given what they've found, the measurements, and whatever has been said to the media," Marc DeWerth, head of the Ohio Bigfoot Conference, says.

Salt Fork has hosted the Ohio Bigfoot Conference since it began in 2005. One of the speakers from this year's

RIGHT: A gathering of Grassman enthusiasts from 2019. The Ohio Bigfoot Conference was canceled for 2020, but plans to continue in 2021.


OHIOBIGFOOT
19

ABOVE: Bigfoot enthusiasts gather for the search.

conference, Dr. Russ Jones, a certified master naturalist, says alleged sightings wouldn't be as common if people knew what Bigfoot truly looked like.

"95% of people misidentify him," Jones says. "He has wrinkles in his eyes, can be smaller or bigger, has no hair on his face, long hair on his arms (about three-four inches) in a reddish-brown color, and can come in all colors because Bigfoot is a species."

Jones is a regular when it comes to the Ohio Bigfoot Conference. He's been a guest speaker three times in the past several years.

"There's not one day I don't deal with something Bigfoot related," Jones says.

Though the conference began as a public event to discuss Bigfoot, it has since grown into the largest Bigfoot-related conference in North America— a three-day event with guest speakers, hikes along trails where Bigfoot is said to have been spotted, along with presentations on findings and research.

"The Bigfoot conference blows every other conference out of the water. Every year we have around 5,000 to 6,000 people show up for the entire weekend … All 144 rooms and 40-50 cabins sell out in less than five days when we announce the dates for the conference," DeWerth says.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the conference didn't have the usual turnout, with only 400-500 registered guests for the weekend. However, DeWerth says he has new ideas for the conference in the future.

"This year, we used up all three levels inside the lodge for people selling Bigfoot apparel, had guest speakers run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and had food trucks outside for people and thought it worked better than expected … We're definitely bringing the food trucks back next year," DeWerth says.

The next conference will be held the weekend of May 1, 2021. DeWerth, who's been involved with Bigfoot for over three decades, says he hasn't had to work a single day.

"Researching Bigfoot isn't a job, it's supposed to be a hobby, and a hobby is supposed to be fun," DeWerth says.

OHIO BIGFOOT CONFERENCE

May 1-2, 2021
Salt Fort State Park

14755 Cadiz Road
Lore City, OH 43755

WEBSITE: ohiobigfootconference.org

AFTERLIFE SENTENCE

The Licking County Historic Jail Has a 130-Year-Old History: Do Ghosts Still Haunt the Cells?

BY **IAN MCKENZIE** | PHOTOS PROVIDED

The castle-like jail is only four stories tall, but it dominates the landscape with its dark stones and spires that shoot into the sky. Only some old furniture remains, such as rusted metal bed frames or an old dining room chair.

The old Licking County jail sits right in Newark. Built in 1889, it was able to hold up to 68 inmates. The stone once had a pink hue, but since the building was heated with coal, soot stuck to the limestone, giving it the dark look it has now.

Originally, the jail was constructed with apartments for both the sheriff and the matron, who was a woman in charge of running the female floor of the jail. There were three floors of cell blocks for men and one floor for women prisoners.

"I normally don't go in here," Nelson Smith says, talking of the sheriff's bedroom. Smith, who used to live in the jail and now gives tours of it.

ABOVE: At least 22 people died in the Licking County Jail, including matron Mae Varner, who lit herself on fire.

Smith lived in the jail in the 1960s for about six years during junior high and high school. His mother, Nora Smith, worked as the matron and head cook.

The apartment was two small bedrooms, a living room and kitchen.

"I thought it was bigger then, but when I walk in it now, it seems awfully small," Smith says.

The room now sits vacant, with an old metal bed frame in the middle. The paint is peeling off all the walls and ceiling.

Four sheriffs had heart attacks in the room, and three died in the room, Smith says. The other sheriff died in the hospital.

The sheriffs were not the only people whose lives ended in the jail.

At least 22 people have died within the walls of the ominous jail—some of those people may have stuck around.

The matron's quarters are allegedly haunted by Mae Varner. She tried to overdose on pain killers but was taken to the hospital to get her stomach pumped.

Varner survived and was then taken to the jail, which wasn't unusual back then to keep people from harming themselves. However, she snuck a match in her cell and lit herself on fire.

Varner's death happened before Smith's mother began working at the jail, and despite the rumors and myth, Smith never experienced anything unusual while he lived there.

There was some loud banging in the female cell block while Smith told this story. When he was asked if he knew what that was, he had no idea.

Another violent death occurred in 1910.

Carl Etherington was about 17 at the time. He was in a bar and got into an argument with the bar owner and a deputy sheriff. When the bar owner pulled a gun on Etherington, he defended himself and shot and killed the bar owner. Then a mob swarmed to kill Etherington, Smith says.

Etherington ran to the jail for protection and was put into a cell. The mob broke down the bars and

then hung him in the square outside of the jail.

Smith says he doesn't completely buy that story because the bars swing out, not in. The mob had a telephone pole that they were using to try to break in the jail.

The jail closed in 1987 and was then used to store county records from various offices. It was briefly used to house Licking County's Veteran's Service Commission. In 2012, however, public interest in the jail sprung up.

Many volunteers helped clean out the jail and it was opened for tours in 2012. Tours of the jail have not been given since March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, documentary crews and paranormal investigators have traveled to investigate if there really are spirits still inside. The jail was featured on the Travel Channel show "Ghost Adventures" in 2014.

One of these documentary crews went into the jail and one of the women on the team fainted when she went into the sheriff's bedroom. But when she was left the room, she was fine, Smith says.

The jail also puts on fundraising events. One of the most popular attractions is the Jail of Terror, which is a haunted house within the jail. The jail also hosts the Jailbreak 5k, which is a run and walk event that starts with Smith "breaking out" of the jail to start the race.

The Licking County Governmental Preservation Society works to preserve and restore historical buildings in the county, including the jail. Currently, fundraising is going toward restoring the jail's former administrative and living areas with historically accurate furniture and decorations.

The jury, however, is still out on whether spirits still roam the cell blocks.

ABOVE Built in 1889, the Licking County Jail once held 68 inmates.

ABOVE: Circleville residents gather to discuss latest UFO research.

SAUCERS SOAR IN POPULARITY

Circleville Residents Thrive in UFO Research After 30 Years

STORY BY **BRANDON MONTY** | PHOTOS PROVIDED

It was clear cold February night in Circleville. Pete Hartinger and his buddy were driving to a high school basketball game, when a strange light appeared in the sky.

Hartinger, a 17-year-old at the time, says it was the brightest he'd ever seen. After following the object out of town, the pair lost sight of the light.

But when the two made it to the Lancaster Turnpike, the light reemerged alongside them. Hartinger describes it as so bright that couldn't see an outline. Before he knew it, the mysterious figure was above the Pickaway County Fairgrounds, hovering roughly 750 feet in the air.

Five days later, on February 27, 1958, Hartinger found himself shaken awake by his brother in the middle of the night, around 1 a.m. The family dog, Pal, was barking. Something was awry. After telling his brother to quit messing with him since he had to go school the next day, Hartinger went to the window where, once again, he witnessed the bright light.

There was the same hovering bright beam of light–floating 2,000 feet in the air. Hartinger said he thought about hiding underneath his bed.

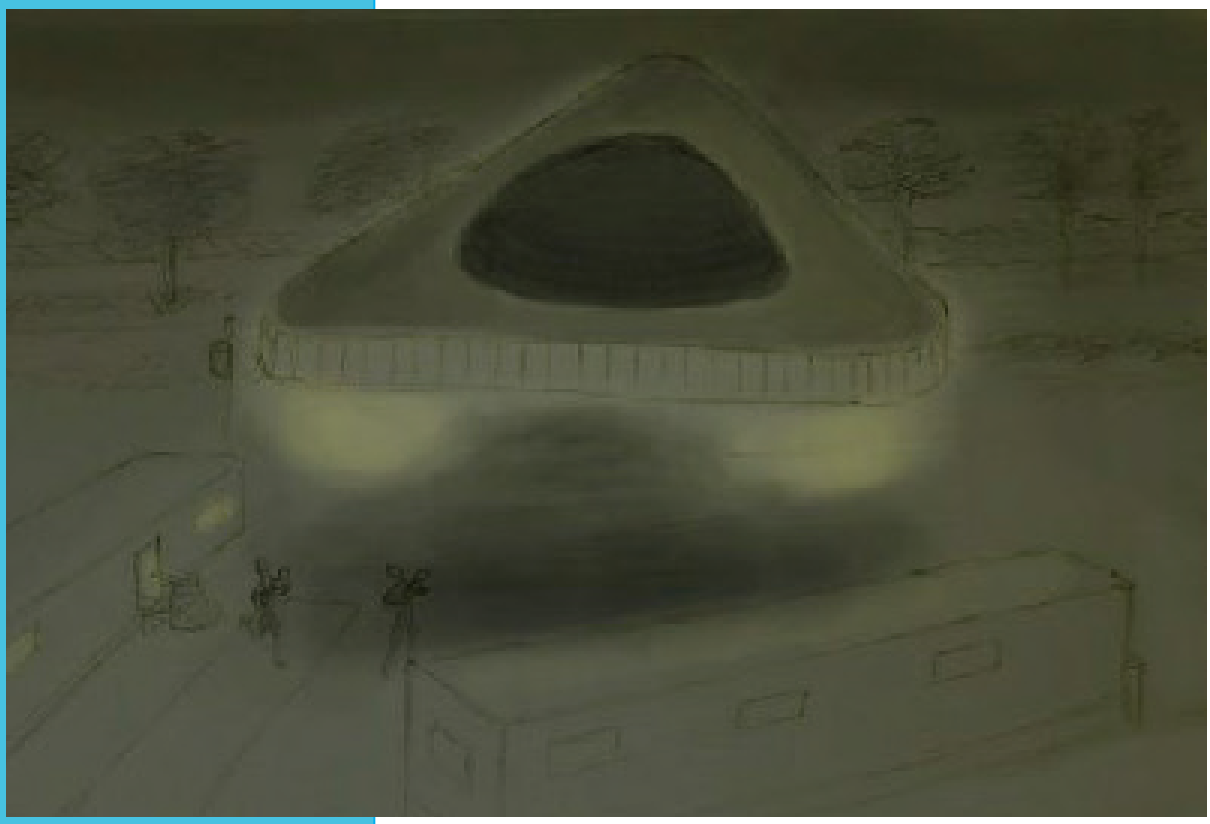
"At that point, I knew it was real," Hartinger says.

Two sightings in five days were all the convincing Hartinger needed. One year later, as a senior at Circleville High School, the quiet-mannered Hartinger was convinced by his public speaking teacher to make a case for UFO existence as part of discussing controversial topics.

Hartinger's passion for UFOs grew more by the day. In 1959, he joined the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomenon (NICAP). After spending over 20 years there, he met two fellow Pickaway County residents, Jon Fry and Delbert Anderson, who were also interested in UFOs. In 1989, the three men formed the Roundtown UFO Society.

The first Roundtown, or RUFOS, meeting was January 7, 1989 at Hartinger's home. Since that date, they've missed six meetings in 31 years. To

LEFT: Delbert Anderson, Jon Fry, and Pete Hartinger at the first meeting of the Roundtown UFO Society.



ABOVE: Illustration of the Circleville sighting from 1989

this day they hold meetings on the second Tuesday of every month. While they usually meet at Circleville Public Library, they've met remotely since the beginning of the pandemic

In the three decades that RUFOS has studied UFO activity, Hartinger says there has never been a better time than now to be studying UFO activity. In the past year, several videos of UFO findings have released to the public, including three from the Department of Defense. Videos from 2004 and 2015 reveal pilots in shock over a "fleet" of an unidentifiable object.

Hartinger also says he anticipates the release of data from the Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force, a government branch that investigates UFO findings.

These documents and videos, combined with the archives of every RUFOS meeting since 2007, present a flurry of information for potential researchers. Still, Hartinger feels it's not his job to convince, but rather inform those interested in UFOs.

"I always tell people: I don't try to convince you of the existence of UFOs," Hartinger says. "I let you do your own research and you be the judge. Some people don't want to hear about it because it's unknown, a fear of the unknown you might say."

Today, according to a study by Chapman University, the belief in UFOs is gaining popularity. In 2016, 27% of Americans believed in UFO existence. In 2020, that number now stands at 45%.

With all the technology available these days, researching UFOs is easier than it's ever been. However, people are still susceptible to false information. Fry says that while the perception of UFOs has changed, there is still a lot of skepticism.

"I think a lot of people base their decisions on these science fiction shows," Fry says. "There's a lot of people who think our research is from things like The X-Files and that's just not true. Even in the military, the only branch that does extensive research is the Navy."

> *"At that point, I knew it was real."*
>
> **— Pete Hartinger**

Hartinger also anticipates the release of a new documentary, "The Phenomena." RUFOS had the opportunity to meet director James Fox at a Mutual UFO Network meeting in 2015. A documentary five years in the making, Hartinger says it could be the greatest piece of UFO information ever released.

"This is an excellent time to get into UFO research," Hartinger says.

As of June 24, there were 112 percent more UFO sightings in the first three months of 2020 than 2019. There were 328 UFO sightings in Ohio last year, which ranked sixth in the nation.

RUFOS believes that UFO research has come a long way. Hartinger and Fry both think that comes from less humiliation from those who have reported sightings. Hartinger says that many years ago, some people were made fun of by government officials for reporting sightings.

"Our technological advancements and new discoveries lend toward the idea of the possibility of life elsewhere in the universe to the point that it would be silly to think that it couldn't exist," RUFOS webmaster Michael Moore says. "To think they might be much more advanced than us is intriguing to say the least."

Currently, RUFOS currently has 74 members. A lifetime membership fee costs only $10. The three original members of the group now have over 163 combined years of UFO research.

RIGHT: Pete Hartinger poses with James Fox, director of a new documentary on UFOs, "The Phenomena."

HOMETOWN HERO

Meet Wendell from Wilkesville, World War II Veteran.

STORY AND PHOTO BY **KERI JOHNSON**

Wendell Earl Chapman is what some around Southeast Ohio might call a "card."

He's a soft-spoken man, but he'll talk your leg off—as he's earned the right. "Wendell," as he's affectionately called, is a source of pride around these parts.

Chapman was a part of some of the first replacement groups that followed D-Day on June 6, 1944. Assigned to Company F, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, 2nd Battalion, he fought in the Battle of Hürtgen Forest—the longest battle in U.S. Army history—the Normandy campaign, the Siegfried Line campaign and the Battle of the Bulge.

Chapman is one of the last living World War II veterans in Vinton County. Born, raised and retired in Wilkesville, he has always called Southeast Ohio home.

Can I take your picture?

"It'll break your camera."

What were you doing before the war?

"I just got out of high school. I was 18 on the second of August that year, and in October, I was in the army. They wanted replacements; I was inducted in. They put me in the Fourth Infantry Division. Our division lost over 35,000 men.

"It was cold in that winter—sometimes it got 30 below zero. The ground was so hard—we'd go to dig a foxhole and the ground was frozen. It was so cold our lips would freeze and bust open. I had never had any experiences like that."

What did you do after your service?

"I went to college on the G.I. Bill. I went to Rio Grande and I went to Ohio University (Athens). I taught school in Wilkesville for six years and they consolidated and I ended up down there in Jackson. ... I enjoyed being a teacher. Me and my wife don't have children so I've always said the kids I have in school are my kids. I enjoyed teaching ... I taught social studies. I've been retired 37 years ... I liked geography, world history, American history."

What do you like to do for fun?

"I like to do woodworking. I've been making a couple of rocking airplanes—rockers for children that they like to run and get on. I've made rocking puppy-dogs, and I just finished a rocking zebra. I've made a rocking golden retriever. It gives me something to do.

"I've been doing woodworking for six, seven, eight or nine years. I got a little shop out there. I think it's one of the things that can stop veterans from commit suicide—I think it'd give them something to do ... My grandmother told me whatever you do, you have to have something to keep you busy, and an idle mind is a devil's workshop."

In 2015, Chapman you were bestowed the highest honor from the French military: the Knight of the Legion of Honor medal, founded by Napoleon. How did that make you feel?

"I made a simpleton out of myself. (laughs) Everybody was drinking— I drank til I was— I guess I thought I was making up for lost time. Too many people were drinking too much at that time."

Chapman is newly 95 and doesn't move too fast—he'll tell you, getting old ain't easy—but it isn't hard for him to keep up. He enjoys a nice drive, growing tomatoes and mowing grass. He also likes going out to eat with his friends, a group of other "retired old men" who call themselves the "Romeo Club." He lives with his wife of many years, Joanne, and their dog, Peanut.

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BELOW: An assortment of children's masks hand sewn by Adrienne Nagy. See pg. 30 for the story of Southeast Ohio in the time of COVID-19.